

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 3, 6 – 8, 10, and 11 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5, 8 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatch (U.S. Pat. No. 6,367,810) in view of GB. 1 299 685 (GB '685). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the supporting ring is T-shaped and includes a radial leg. Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the radial leg of the supporting ring is completely enveloped by the elastomeric material of the first sealing lip. This subject matter was previously found in claims 4 and 5, respectively. Applicants respectfully assert that neither Hatch nor GB '685 teach or suggest such a structure.

More specifically, referring to Figures 1-5 of Hatch (and particularly Figure 2), it can be seen that the material of the first sealing lip 71 does not completely envelope the support ring 63. Instead, the material of the first sealing lip 71 is only disposed on one side of the support ring 63 while a gasket 67 is disposed on the other. GB '685 also fails to teach such a configuration. Because neither Hatch nor GB '685 teaches or suggests a configuration wherein the elastomeric material of the first sealing lip completely envelopes a radial leg of a support ring, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 and each corresponding dependent claim would not have been obvious.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully assert that because claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claims 4 and 5, new issues that require further consideration and/or search have not been presented. As such, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 and each corresponding dependent claim are in condition for allowance.

Claims 4 and 6-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatch and GB '685 as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Nagasawa (U.S.Pat. No. 4,623,153).

Claim 4 is cancelled and claims 6-7 depend from independent claim 1, addressed above. Claims 6 and 7 are not obvious for at least the same reasons. Namely, neither Hatch, GB '685, nor Nagasawa teaches, suggests, or provides motivation to utilize a sealing ring including a configuration wherein the elastomeric material of the first sealing lip completely envelopes a radial leg of a supporting ring. Because this feature is neither taught nor suggested, the claimed invention would not have been obvious.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatch and GB '685.

Claim 11 is dependent on claim 1, addressed above. Claim 11 is not obvious for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

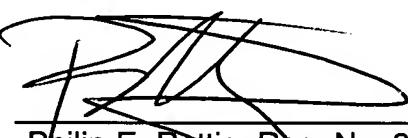
It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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